



Education and Youth

USAID/Kenya's Education and Youth program

USAID/Kenya works in partnership with the Government of Kenya to improve learning outcomes in early grade reading, provide pathways to education for bright but disadvantaged students, and empower youth with the skills and opportunities to lead the way to a peaceful and prosperous Kenya.



Robin Johnson/USAID Kenya

The Primary Reading and Math Initiative is piloting the use of e-readers and tablets to improve reading outcomes in primary schools in Kisumu.

FY 2013 Budget

\$11 million

Who implements the Education and Youth program?

- Aga Khan Foundation
- CHF International
- Cooperative League of the USA
- Education Development Center, Inc.
- Equity Bank Foundation
- Kenya Community Development Foundation
- Kenyatta University
- Mercy Corps
- RTI International
- Winrock International
- World Vision

Where does the USAID/Kenya's Education and Youth program work?

Nationwide

What does the Education and Youth program do?

USAID/Kenya supports the Ministry of Education to improve the skills and expertise of education professionals and to bring modern teaching methods and technology into the classroom. Success is measured not by the number of children in school, but by the number of children who can read by grade three. USAID works in non-formal and formal primary schools in Nairobi, Kisumu, Kiambu, Nakuru, and the mainly Muslim communities of Coast and North Eastern Provinces.

USAID/Kenya also partners with civil society and private sector organizations to assist children orphaned or otherwise vulnerable due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and with academically talented children from economically distressed homes, to complete their education and become leaders in their communities.

USAID's youth program has engaged over one million youth to step forward as leaders to achieve a greater voice in national reform, create new livelihood opportunities, and advocate for peace and better governance.

How is USAID/Kenya's Education and Youth program making a difference?

USAID has helped more than one million Kenyan youth age 18-35 to organize themselves into democratic youth *bunges* (Kiswahili for parliament). They have formed a National Youth Bunge Association to advocate for issues important to the youth of Kenya, and launched 25 youth-led and managed savings and credit associations. Recently, youth *bunge* members have reported they are making more income and feeling more empowered since joining the *bunge* movement.

Helping to prepare the next generation, USAID's education activities reached 445,000 students and 13,000 teachers in the past year. Our improved textbooks, lesson plans, and teaching methods demonstrated a remarkable increase in literacy when compared with control schools. The U.K. Government has expanded USAID's successful pilot methods to an additional 700 schools. USAID is ready to support the Ministry of Education to take the improved methods nationwide to all 28,000 primary schools in Kenya in order to ensure that Kenya has a literate workforce to support the goals of Vision 2030.

What key challenges does the Education and Youth program face?

Four million more students are enrolled in primary school than in 2003—a 46 percent increase—and the number of schools have grown by 7,000. With this increase, however, came a dearth of teachers, inadequate textbooks and overrun school facilities. Access and quality remain key overarching issues for the education system in Kenya. Approximately one million school-age children are not attending school, many of those children are ethnically marginalized or economically disadvantaged.

Kenyan youth between the ages of 18 and 35, make up 35 percent of the population and have not been given adequate opportunities to develop the necessary job skills to participate fully in the local economy. Close to 2.5 million youth are currently unemployed and only 125,000 entering the formal workforce each year.



Prior to the March 2013 general elections, hundreds of thousands of youth *bunge* members stood up for peace as part of the nationwide *Tuko Rada* peace festival jointly supported by the National Youth Bunge Association and the National Cohesion and Integration Commission

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USAID's Education and Youth program in action

In Kenya, possessing a national ID is critical. Without a national ID card, Kenyans cannot enroll in a university, get a job, open a bank account or vote. In 2012, the *bunges* across Kenya, through the National Youth Bunge Association, worked with the Kenyan government to mobilize youth to register for their national ID in time to register to vote in the 2013 general elections. The posters of their “My ID My Life” campaign were plastered in villages from Lake Victoria to the Indian Ocean Coast. And more than half a million youth turned out to register.

“An ID is more than just a card. It is my life,” declared 18-year-old Verah Akoth Abonyo from Central Kadem in Migori County. Verah, who has been working odd jobs for a couple of years, said, “I can finally get a real job, go to university. My ambition is to go to college and study information technology.” The Migori County Bunge Forum mobilized huge numbers of youth while working in tandem with the local district registration office and the district chiefs.

The county registration bureau has only four government employees and is located in a small hut in Migori town. Prior to the youth campaign, the office was getting barely 20 people a day coming in for ID cards. Through the partnership with the youth *bunges*, the bureau was able to go to the people, setting up temporary registration sites such as the one at Sere Primary School where Verah was one of 321 youth queued up to register.

“For us, we can’t go out and sensitize people,” explained Sephaniah Otieno Ogundo, district registration officer for Awendo district in Migori County. “The youth are the ones going out into the countryside and finding all these people. Without them, we wouldn’t get this crowd.”

